

STUCK, STRETCHED OR SPINNING OUT?

Practical Fixes For Businesses
That Are Growing Fast, Falling
Apart, Or Going Nowhere

Debra Chantry-Taylor & Adam Harris
Business Action
Carefrontational Changemakers™



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Author Foreword

Most business owners do not wake up one morning & suddenly realise their business has become harder than it needs to be.

It happens gradually.

A few more people join the team. A few more clients come on board. A few more decisions need approval. A few more problems get pushed to next week. A few more "quick chats" turn into half the day disappearing.

Then one day, the business that once felt exciting starts to feel heavy.

For fast-growing businesses, the pressure often comes from speed. The business is moving, but the wheels are starting to wobble. People are stretched. Systems are inconsistent. The founder or CEO is still pulled into too much.

Everyone is busy, but not always focused.

For stuck businesses, the pressure feels different. The energy has flattened. The same issues keep coming back. The team works hard, but progress feels slow. The business is not broken, but it is not really moving either.

Both situations are frustrating. Both are fixable.

This eBook was written for business owners & leadership teams who want to step back, look honestly at what is really going on, & make practical changes that create clarity, accountability & momentum.

Author Foreword

They do not.

But they can help you ask sharper questions, challenge assumptions, name the real issue, keep the conversation productive & turn decisions into action.

Our work is **Carefrontational**.

That means we care enough to tell the truth, & we do it in a way that helps people move forward rather than shut down.

If your business is stuck, stretched or spinning out, you do not need more noise.

You need clarity.

Let's start there.

- Debra Chantry-Taylor & Adam Harris

Author Foreword

It is not about theory. It is not about adding more complexity. Most businesses already have enough complexity to make a grown adult consider farming alpacas instead.

This is about getting clear on the basics that matter:

- Do you have the right people doing the right work?
- Is leadership clear, or is everything still circling back to the owner?
- Does everyone understand where the business is going?
- Are your systems strong enough for the next stage?
- Are you naming the real issues?
- Are you measuring what matters?
- Are people focused on the priorities that will genuinely move the business forward?

You can absolutely start this work yourself.

But here is the honest bit. Most leadership teams struggle to see their own patterns while they are inside them. The same conversations repeat because the same dynamics are running underneath. The same issues stay stuck because no one wants to say the thing that needs to be said.

That is where external facilitation & coaching can make a powerful difference.

Not because someone outside your business knows more about your business than you do.

Introduction: Growth Is Not Always Progress

Some businesses look successful from the outside.

Revenue is growing. The team is bigger. The clients keep coming. The owner is busier than ever.

But inside the business, things can feel very different.

Decisions are slower. People are unclear. Meetings go around in circles. The founder or CEO is still pulled into everything. Good people are frustrated. Customers get inconsistent experiences. Everyone is busy, but the business still feels harder than it should.

Other businesses have the opposite problem.

They are not growing fast. They are stuck.

The same issues keep coming back. The same people carry too much. The same conversations happen again & again, usually with a slightly different title on the meeting invite. Nothing terrible is happening, but nothing much is changing either.

Whether your business is growing fast or sitting in neutral, the problem is rarely lack of effort.

Most business owners are working bloody hard.

Introduction: Growth Is Not Always Progress

The real issue is usually that the business has outgrown the way it operates.

What worked at one stage will not always work at the next. A business that once ran well on instinct, loyalty & heroic effort eventually needs more clarity, structure, trust, discipline & focus. **This eBook is designed to help you step back & look at the areas that most often create drag in growing or stuck businesses:**

- People & culture
- Leadership & ownership
- Vision & strategy
- Process & systems
- Issues & opportunities
- Outcomes & accountability
- Focus & action

Not as a formal model. Not as theory. Just as practical areas that matter if you want a business that can scale without burning everyone out.

You can start this work yourself. You can also move faster with an external facilitator & coach who can ask better questions, challenge the thinking in the room, keep the conversation honest & help the team turn good intentions into real progress.

Because growth should not feel like driving a fast car with loose wheels, no dashboard & six people arguing over the map.

Stuck, Stretched or Spinning Out?

Chapter 01: People & Culture

Most business problems have a people issue hiding somewhere underneath.

A good person in the wrong role.

A poor performer being carried for too long.

A senior person damaging the culture.

A founder who cannot let go.

A team that is nice, but not honest.

A structure that made sense three years ago, but no longer fits the business.

People issues are expensive because they rarely stay in one corner.

One unclear role creates confusion across a whole team. One avoided conversation creates months of resentment.

One toxic high performer can quietly teach everyone else that standards are optional.

A healthy business needs clear roles, capable people, strong communication & agreed behaviours.

That sounds simple. It is not always easy.

Many leadership teams avoid people conversations because they do not want to upset anyone. The intent may be kind, but the result is often unfair. The person does not get the feedback they need. The team carries the frustration. The business pays the price.

Chapter 01: People & Culture

The strongest cultures are not the softest cultures. They are the clearest. People know what is expected. They know what good looks like. They know what behaviour is acceptable. They know whether they are winning. They know where they stand.

Questions to ask:

- Do we have the right structure for the size & stage of the business now?
- Are people clear about their roles, responsibilities & decision-making authority?
- Are we tolerating behaviour we would never hire for today?
- Do we have honest conversations early, or wait until frustration builds?
- Are our best people energised, or quietly exhausted?

What to do:

Start with the work the business needs done, not the people currently doing it.

What are the key roles required for the next stage of growth? What capability does each role need? Where are the gaps? Where are people overloaded? Where is the founder or CEO still holding work that now belongs somewhere else?

Then have the conversations. Kindly. Clearly. Directly.

This is where Carefrontational leadership matters. Care enough to be human. Be brave enough to be honest.

Stuck, Stretched or Spinning Out?

Chapter 02: Leadership & Ownership

A business can get very messy when ownership & leadership are blurred.

Owners may assume they have the right to make every decision. Leaders may be accountable for results but not given real authority. Founders may say they want the team to step up, then keep grabbing the wheel every time the road bends.

Ownership is about value, risk, investment, return & long-term direction. Leadership is about running the business day to day, developing people, making decisions, solving problems & delivering results.

Sometimes the same person wears both hats. That is fine, as long as everyone knows which hat is being worn.

When that is unclear, teams slow down. People wait for approval. Leaders hesitate. Decisions get revisited. The founder becomes the bottleneck. The team becomes dependent rather than empowered.

Questions to ask:

- Who truly has authority to make which decisions?
- Are leaders being given responsibility without authority?
- Is the owner still interfering in areas the leadership team should own?
- Are we building a leadership team, or just a group of senior people reporting upwards?
- Does the business rely too heavily on one person?

Chapter 02: Leadership & Ownership

What to do:

Clarify decision rights.

What decisions belong to the owner or owners? What decisions belong to the leadership team? What decisions can managers make without asking permission? What needs consultation? What simply needs communication after the decision is made?

This is not bureaucracy.

It is speed.

Clarity speeds things up. Confusion slows everything down.

The aim is not to remove the owner from the business. The aim is to make sure the business can operate without everything depending on one person's approval, memory, mood or availability.

That is how a business becomes stronger, more valuable & less exhausting.

Chapter 03: Vision & Strategy

A business can survive on hustle for a while.

It cannot scale on hustle alone.

At some point, the team needs to know where the business is going, why it matters & how their work fits into the bigger picture.

Many founders & business owners have a clear picture in their head. Unfortunately, the team cannot execute what they cannot see.

If the future lives only in the founder's head, everyone else is left guessing.

That creates scattered decisions.

Sales chases one thing. Operations protects another. Finance worries about something else. Marketing heads off in a creative direction. Everyone is trying to help, but they are not always pulling the same way.

A clear vision helps people understand the destination.

A clear strategy helps people understand the route.

Chapter 03: Vision & Strategy

Questions to ask:

- Can our leadership team describe the future in the same simple language?
- Do our people understand what matters most?
- Are we clear about who we serve & where we play?
- Do we know what we are saying no to?
- Are our daily decisions connected to the bigger picture?

What to do:

Get the future out of people's heads & into plain English.

Where are you going? Who are you here to serve? What do you do best? What makes you different? What matters most over the next few years? What is the route you are choosing?

Keep it simple.

If your team needs a 47-slide deck to understand the direction, it is not clear enough yet.

The best strategy is not the cleverest one. It is the one people understand, believe in & can act on.

Chapter 04: Process & Systems

Every business has secret sauce.

The way you sell. The way you deliver. The way you onboard clients. The way you solve problems. The way you create the experience people come back for.

The problem is that too much of this secret sauce often lives in people's heads.

That is risky.

If key knowledge sits with the founder, one senior person, or a few long-serving team members, the business is vulnerable. Quality becomes inconsistent. Training takes too long. Mistakes repeat. Growth becomes harder than it needs to be.

Processes & systems are not there to kill creativity.

Good systems create freedom.

They allow good people to do good work consistently without needing to reinvent the wheel every Tuesday.

Bad systems create paperwork theatre.

Nobody needs that.

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Chapter 04: Process & Systems

Questions to ask:

- Do customers get a consistent experience?
- Are our most important ways of working documented?
- Do new people learn quickly, or rely on tribal knowledge?
- Are we repeating the same mistakes?
- Is the business too dependent on a few key people?

What to do:

Start with the areas that matter most.

Customer experience. Sales. Delivery. Finance. People. Quality. Risk.

Document the essential way work gets done. Not every tiny step. Not a monster manual nobody reads. Capture the critical steps, standards & decision points that protect quality & make the business scalable.

Then make sure people actually use them. A process that sits in a folder untouched is not a process. It is business compost. Systems need ownership, review & improvement.

When done well, they protect the magic rather than killing it.

Chapter 05: Issues & Opportunities

Every business has elephants.

The underperforming senior person.

The founder bottleneck.

The customer nobody wants to lose but everyone hates serving.

The margin problem.

The messy handover.

The brilliant opportunity that may be a distraction in shiny shoes.

Healthy businesses name the elephants.

Unhealthy businesses decorate around them.

The same applies to opportunities.

Not every opportunity is a good opportunity.

Some are expensive distractions.

Some are ego projects. Some are genuinely worth pursuing, but only if the business has the capacity, capability & focus to make them work.

Chapter 05: Issues & Opportunities

Questions to ask:

- What are we avoiding?
- What problem keeps coming back?
- What opportunity are we chasing without enough thought?
- Where are we confusing symptoms with the real issue?
- What conversation would create the most progress if we finally had it properly?

What to do:

Create the discipline of naming the real issue.

Not the polite version. Not the easy thing to blame. The real issue.

Then decide what needs to happen next.

Does it need a decision? More information? A difficult conversation? A clear owner? A commercial review? A no?
Avoidance is expensive.

Carefrontational leadership means bringing the truth into the room without turning the room into a boxing ring.

That is where progress starts.

Stuck, Stretched or Spinning Out?

Chapter 06: Outcomes & Accountability

You cannot run a business well if you are flying blind.

Financial results matter, but they often tell you what has already happened.

Useful measures help you see what is happening early enough to make better decisions.

What tells you sales activity is healthy?

What tells you delivery is slipping?

What tells you cash may get tight?

What tells you people are overloaded?

What tells you customers are unhappy before they leave?

Good measures are not about punishment.

They create clarity.

Accountability is not about blame either. It is about ownership.

Who owns the result? What does success look like? How often do we review it? What happens when things are off track?

Chapter 06: Outcomes & Accountability

Questions to ask:

- Are we measuring what actually matters?
- Do our numbers help us make better decisions?
- Does each important outcome have a clear owner?
- Are people accountable for results, or just activity?
- Do we know early enough when something is off track?

What to do:

Choose fewer, better measures.

The test is simple: will this help us make a decision or change behaviour?

If not, it may be interesting, but it is not useful. Then connect each important outcome to a person who owns it.

Not a committee. Not "the team". A person. Ownership does not mean doing all the work. It means making sure the result is achieved, the right conversations happen & the business knows whether things are on track.

Clear accountability reduces stress because people know what they own. Confusion creates anxiety.

Clarity creates confidence.

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Chapter 07: Focus & Action

Most businesses do not have a shortage of ideas.

They have too many.

Everything is important. Everything is urgent. Everything needs attention. So the team runs hard, switches constantly & finishes less than expected.

Focus is a competitive advantage.

It means choosing the few things that matter most now, then giving them enough attention to move properly.

Action is where the plan becomes real.

Not in the workshop. Not in the document. Not in the enthusiastic conversation.

In the daily & weekly behaviour.

Chapter 07: Focus & Action

Questions to ask:

- Are we trying to do too much at once?
- Do priorities change before anything is finished?
- Are people clear on what matters most right now?
- Do meetings lead to action, or just discussion?
- Are we confusing movement with progress?

What to do:

Choose fewer priorities.

Painful, but necessary.

Decide what matters most over the next stretch of time. Clarify what success looks like. Assign ownership. Review progress. Remove obstacles quickly.

Then protect the focus. Distractions will appear. That does not mean your priorities were wrong. That is just business being business.

The discipline is staying with what matters long enough for it to produce results.

Momentum comes from consistent action, not occasional inspiration.

Stuck, Stretched or Spinning Out?

Final Thought: You Can Do This Yourself, But You Do Not Have To Do It Alone

None of this is complicated.

That does not mean it is easy.

It takes courage to look honestly at your people, your leadership, your direction, your systems, your unresolved issues, your measures & your priorities.

It takes even more courage to admit where the business has outgrown the way it currently operates.

You can start by asking:

- Where are we unclear?
- Where are we avoiding?
- Where are we overcomplicating?
- Where are we relying on heroes?
- Where are we measuring the wrong things?
- Where are we busy, but not progressing?
- What needs to change next?

Final Thought: You Can Do This Yourself, But You Do Not Have To Do It Alone

A skilled external facilitator & coach helps create the space for those conversations.

Not to tell you what to do.

To help you get the truth on the table, make better decisions & turn those decisions into action.

Because the fastest businesses are not always the strongest.

The strongest businesses know how to steer.

Ready To Get Your Business Moving Again?

Reading this eBook is a useful start.

But reading does not change a business.

Conversations do.

Decisions do.

Action does.

If your business is growing fast, feeling stuck, or starting to wobble under the weight of complexity, the next step is to get the right people in the room & have the conversations that matter.

At **Business Action**, we work with business owners & leadership teams who want more clarity, stronger accountability, healthier conversations & better execution.

We do not come in to tell you what to do. We facilitate the conversations your team needs to have, ask the questions that cut through the noise, & help you turn good intentions into practical action.

We are **Carefrontational Changemakers™**.

That means we bring care, courage & commercial reality into the room.

No fluff. No corporate waffle. No pretending the elephant is not sitting on the boardroom table eating the biscuits.

Stuck, Stretched or Spinning Out?

A FEW GOOD PLACE TO START

Ask yourself:

- What is the one issue we keep circling but never properly solve?
- Where is the business too dependent on one or two people?
- What part of the business feels harder than it should?
- What conversation would create the most progress if we finally had it honestly?
- What needs to change in the next 90 days?

If those questions hit a nerve, that is probably where the work starts.

Let's Talk

To explore how Business Action can help your leadership team get clearer, stronger & more focused, contact:

Email: hello@businessaction.com

Website: www.businessaction.com

Because business should not feel like pushing a shopping trolley with one wheel stuck sideways.

Let's get it moving properly.

[BOOK A DISCOVERY CALL HERE](#)